



### **What is the Family Retreat?**

The Retreat first took place in 2006. Following the success of our first Summer School in 2005, the St Catherine's Trust wanted to design a retreat which parents could attend with their children, without missing out on spiritual talks intended for adults. This is made possible by arranging appropriate activities, supervised by our volunteers, during those talks.

The Family Retreat has taken place over the years in Ardingly College, Ratcliffe College, and the Oratory School. In recent years we have had different priestly Retreat Givers each year: Fr John Hunwicke of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, the Sons of the Holy Redeemer from Papa Stronsay, Fr Serafino Lanzetta from Gosport, priests of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, and (in 2019) priests of the Fraternity of St Peter.

### **Children and the St Catherine's Trust**

Unlike the Summer School, children at the Family Retreat remain in the care of their parents or guardians, who are on the same site. Our volunteers undertake to supervise the children only for set periods of time: during the four talks given by the Retreat Givers to the adults. (We also ask the Retreat Givers to spend some time with the children, which is facilitated if there are two priests or a priest and a seminarian.)

The supervised activities will be aimed at children up to the age of 12, though older children will be welcome to attend.

We are advised that DBS checks are not necessary for our volunteers in this context; however, our principal volunteers are checked. The St Catherine's Trust has public liability insurance.

Children are also welcome at the talks for adults: this option can make sense for the very youngest children and older children.

During meal times, liturgies, and during periods of free time the children are the responsibility of their parents or guardians in the normal way, and they can decide whether and under what conditions to allow their children out of their sight!

### **Who is the Retreat for?**

While we have tried to make the Retreat accessible to parents with children of all ages, adults unaccompanied by children are also very welcome. The presence of children with their families makes for an atmosphere more relaxed than in a typical retreat, but equally those who have only experienced children in secular contexts may be surprised by how well-behaved they are.

The talks are aimed at adults and older children, and there are opportunities for Confession. There are also opportunities to meet the other retreatants, and on Saturday afternoon there is usually a bookstall during tea.

### **Liturgy at the Family Retreat**

All the liturgies of the Family Retreat are celebrated in the *Vetus Ordo* (Extraordinary Form). On each of the three days there is Sung, or High, Mass: before dinner on the first day, and before lunch on Saturday and Sunday. There is also Compline on the two evenings, Rosary on the two mornings, and on Saturday a procession or (when the Retreat falls in Lent) Stations of the Cross, and Vespers and Benediction.

The liturgies are accompanied by Gregorian Chant sung to a high standard.

Male servers (of all ages) with experience of the Traditional Mass are encouraged to make themselves known to the organisers in advance if they wish to serve, and to bring a cassock and cotta if they have one (we will also have some to lend).

### **The Venue and Accommodation**

The Oratory School was founded in 1859 by Bl John Henry, Cardinal Newman. It is set in extensive grounds with lawns, playing fields, and woods, in the countryside between Reading and Oxford.

Its boarding houses are modern and comfortable. They include some multi-occupancy rooms ideal for families. Rooms sometimes have wash-basins but are not *en-suite*.

There is no charge for children of five and under who do not need their own bed: that is, sharing a bed or using a travel-cot or Moses-basket.

The food is served in a central dining room with a canteen, and is consistently of a high standard.

The School's location is:

The Oratory School,  
Woodcote,  
Nr Reading,  
South Oxfordshire RG8 0PJ  
([\*click for a map\*](#))

### **The Retreat and the Chant Training Weekend**

The Retreat shares the venue with the Gregorian Chant Network's Chant Training Weekend, whose cantors and trainee singers accompany the liturgies of the weekend, join the retreatants for meals, and so on.

The Chant Training Weekend is open to any men or women who wish to learn Gregorian Chant, with discounts for members of scholas and choirs registered with the Network. It often happens that one member of a family at the Retreat will take part in the Chant Training Weekend. The other singers are accommodated in a separate boarding house from the Retreat.

The Gregorian Chant Network has its own website:

<http://gregorianchantnetwork.blogspot.com>

### **Dates**

Our use of the Oratory School as our venue means that the Retreat weekend must take place during their school holidays; it also avoids the weekends of Easter and Palm Sunday. Accordingly, when Easter is earlier, it takes place Friday to Sunday of the weekend of Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter Sunday); when Easter is later, it takes place Friday to Sunday of the weekend before Palm Sunday (in the older calendar, this is called Passion Sunday).

In 2019 the dates will be 5-7<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Prices, Discounts, and Booking:**

(LMS members: £10 discount on all prices)

Single Adult in a bedroom: £195

Couple or family group in beds: £155 per head,

Children (5 and over): £60

Under 5s not needing a bed: free

Bursaries are available of 50% of the total due for families in financial need. These are provided by the **Latin Mass Society**, who kindly sponsor the Family Retreat in this way.

Booking is handled with an online form on the St Catherine's Trust website:

[www.stcatherinetrust.org](http://www.stcatherinetrust.org)

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